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Congresswomen Matsui, Capps and Roybal-Allard Lead Letter Expressing Support for the Prevention and Public Health Fund

Letter signed by 15 members of the California Congressional delegation urges President to protect the Fund during deficit reduction negotiations

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congresswomen Doris Matsui (CA-05), Lois Capps (CA-23) and Lucille Roybal-Allard (CA-34) led a letter from members of the California Congressional delegation to President Obama expressing support for the Prevention and Public Health Fund (the Fund) and encouraging its protection during the ongoing deficit reduction negotiations.

The Fund is a key provision of the Affordable Care Act aimed at lowering health care costs. It was designed to expand and sustain the necessary infrastructure to prevent disease, promote early detection, and manage conditions before they become severe. While the Fund is supporting critical investments in all 50 states, California has benefited greatly, and has already received more than \$90.6 million in grants to strengthen the public health system and address the major risk factors for chronic disease.

“Not only is the Prevention and Public Health Fund critical to improving our nation’s public health and reducing the spread of disease, it will also save millions of dollars in health costs in the long run,” said Congresswoman Matsui. “Prevention is the key to lowering health care costs and the Fund provides the investment necessary to create a healthier society.”

“In addition to expanding access to affordable health care for millions and holding insurance

companies accountable to consumers, the Affordable Care Act makes unprecedented investments in improving the health and wellbeing of every American by focusing on prevention. Unless we make needed investments in efforts to improve public health and tackle preventable, costly health problems like obesity and diabetes, we will never be able to get the growth in health care costs under control. That's why it is so important that we protect the Prevention and Public Health Fund—our nation's only dedicated resource for prevention—from additional cuts," said Congresswoman Lois Capps.

"The public health community is united in its belief that prevention is a critical component to successfully addressing our nation's public health crisis and reining in the astronomical cost of health care," said Congresswoman Roybal-Allard. "At a time when the need for fiscal responsibility is paramount, cutting the Public Health Prevention fund would be a shortsighted decision resulting in higher health care costs in the long term. By investing in prevention, we can save lives and money."

A PDF copy of the signed letter is available [here](#) .

The full text of the letter is below:

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As members of California's Congressional delegation, we respectfully write to you to express our support for the Prevention and Public Health Fund (the Fund) and encourage you to protect the Fund as deficit reduction negotiations continue.

As you know, today the Fund is supporting critical investments in innovative, evidence-based activities in all 50 states, including California, and represents our nation's only focused,

dedicated investment to keeping Americans healthy before they develop burdensome and costly illness and disease. It also is one of the key provisions of the Affordable Care Act aimed at lowering health care costs.

Our state is benefiting greatly from the Fund, and its focus on evidence-based interventions to keep people healthy. California has already received more than \$90.6 million in Prevention Fund grants to strengthen the public health system and address the major risk factors for chronic disease. For example, the Fund made it possible to award a \$9.8 million Community Transformation Grant (CTG) to the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health to address the known common factors contributing to expensive preventable disease: heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and cancer. Similarly, San Diego received a \$3 million CTG award which, among other things, will help up to 2.9 million people control high blood pressure and cholesterol in healthcare and workplace settings by 2016. And both the San Francisco Department of Public Health and California-based Public Health Institute are receiving funds to expand efforts in tobacco-free living, active living and healthy eating, while building healthy and safe physical environments.

The Fund is also working in statewide and nationally to further declines in smoking rates. During the first week of CDC airing its Tips from Former Smokers campaign, supported by the Fund, California saw dramatic spikes in the number of calls to 1-800-QUIT NOW, with a 300 percent increase during just the first week of the campaign. And more and more Californians will benefit from funds to strengthen the state's public health departments through proven prevention efforts like improving access to vaccines.

Combined, these evidence-based, targeted prevention programs can have a large impact on both the physical health of Californians and the fiscal health of our state. In fact, a recent analysis included as part of Trust for America's Health's *F as in Fat* 2012 report concluded that reducing average body mass index (BMI) by just five percent over the next five years could save \$28 billion in California alone by 2020 and avoid 420,000 cases of type 2 diabetes, over 29,000 cases of cancer, 320,000 cases of cardiovascular disease, and 209,000 cases of arthritis.

Our nation faces difficult fiscal decisions in the coming months; however prevention is the key to lowering health care costs and creating a long-term path to a healthier society and economically sound health system in California and across America. We thank you for your ongoing support, including the issuance of a Statement of Administration Policy on H.R. 4628, the Interest Rate Reduction Act, which highlighted the importance of the Fund, and its benefits to women, and look forward to working with you to maintain our investment in the Prevention and Public Health

Fund.